



**County of Los Angeles
Quality and Productivity
Commission**

565 Kenneth Hahn Hall of
Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Telephone: (213) 974-1361
(213) 974-1390
(213) 893-0322

Website: <http://qpc.lacounty.gov>

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March 18, 2020

Mr. Ricardo D. Garcia

Public Defender

Public Defender's Office

210 West Temple Street

19-513 Clara Shortridge Foltz Criminal Justice Center

Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Mr. Garcia:

Thank you for a very informative update received at the Quality and Productivity Commission's Department Visit on March 12, 2020. Commissioners commend the Department's Strategic Plan vision to provide "evolutionary and revolutionary changes in the justice system," and to promote collaboration with County partners (e.g., District Attorney, Alternate Public Defender, Superior Court, etc.) and community stakeholders to achieve clients' goals.

Commissioners were also pleased to hear of the Department's holistic advocacy and client-centered approach to ensure clients have access to both legal and non-legal services. The Public Defender has the following resources in place to address these needs: a Specialized Immigration Unit to engage in appellate advocacy and provide post-conviction immigration relief; the Homeless Strategy and Criminal Records Clearing Project to combat homelessness by obtaining reductions/dismissals on misdemeanors and felony convictions; and the MacArthur Diversion Program that embeds a Department of Mental Health staff in the courtroom to determine diversion eligibility and facilitate linkage to services.

The Department also partnered with UCLA School of Law to introduce The Bail Project as a pilot program at the Compton Branch. The Bail Project recycles money from a revolving fund to pay bail for those in need. The Compton pilot program has bailed out 134 people (95 felony, 39 misdemeanor) with a return to court rate of 96%.

Commissioners also commend your initiatives to improve productivity and efficiency throughout the Department, including in the following areas:

We support plain language

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- Recruiting a Law Enforcement Accountability Advisor to direct the discovery and litigation of law enforcement misconduct cases, and charged with creating a more robust system for gathering, storing and making police misconduct information easily accessible to Department attorneys
- Creating a mobile Homeless Outreach Unit or “Help Squad,”—in collaboration with various cities and community partners—which travels to locations where the homeless live to provide legal services (e.g., information about clearing warrants, reducing/dismissing/expunging criminal records, etc.)
- Upgrading the Department’s Client Case Management System (CCMS) to digitize and automate several manual case preparation processes and provide accurate real-time data reports and analytics to measure workload, appropriately allocate staff, and simplify resource utilization assessment

We look forward to working with you in the near future on other operational enhancements, including:

- Moving towards paperless discovery that will permit case file discovery to be seamlessly added to CCMS. Attorneys will instantly have access to the case file on their computers or be able to download the file to their mobile-devices
- Developing a collaborative inter-department model along with policies and procedures for civil representation of clients that have issues that are not strictly confined to criminal law
- Partnering with County departments to provide non-legal services to clients (e.g., general relief, housing, medical assistance, etc.)

Thank you for a productive meeting. We will continue to work closely with your Productivity Managers, Gail Bristo and Jeffrey Gilliam. Please contact Jackie Guevarra, Executive Director, at (213) 974-1361 for additional information.

Sincerely,



JACKI BACHARACH
Chair

JB:JTG

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